

A Woman in Earnest and Otherwise

WINIFRED KIRKLAND in her two recent volumes, *The New Death* and *The Joys of Being a Woman*, shows herself to be an essayist of power and of charm. She proves her right to be counted one of the small group of writers among us who are making the essay what it should be and generally is not, an expression both of intellect and of personality.

Miss Kirkland has been known as the author of several books of fiction and as a writer of short stories. In *The New Death* she discusses the change in standards that the present concept of death is bringing about. The great war has set the world to thinking of death and of immortality. The question propounded by Job centuries ago, "If a man die, shall he live again?" is resounding in countless hearts to-day. Speaking of the enigma of the passing of the young, Miss Kirkland says:

New and Old Deaths.

"No one can forget them, no one can get away from them, those boys dead upon the battle fields of Europe. We are used to speaking of this or that friend's philosophy of life; the time has now come when every one of us who is to live at peace with his own brain must possess also a philosophy of death."

Miss Kirkland says that our present view of immortality is not that of the Greeks, who debased it, nor of the medieval believers, who exalted it, nor of the materialistic science of Germany that denied it.

"The Germans have been more logical, more obedient to the dicta of science than the rest of us, but it can hardly be denied that one's philosophy of death is the most decisive element in one's philosophy of life, if one stops to conjecture the difference in current events if the Germans, as a nation, had believed in the personal survival after slaughter of their own sons or of others."

The author asserts that the *New Death* as we know it now entering as an influence among us "is so far mainly an immense yearning receptivity, an unprecedented humility both of brain and of heart toward all the implications of survival." She insists that it is an intuition entering into the lives of the people as a whole, of the simple people, and that it does not matter whether the intellectuals share it or not.

The Best Witnesses.

Miss Kirkland says that because of the intensity of their need in the face of death people are turning, not as before to their old masters and guides, the theologians, nor to the scientists, but to "the supreme critics of death, our young men who are dying. These speak, these act, as men having authority; and the force of their influence on the world they have left cannot be calculated, so powerful are the reasons for this influence."

The New Death is written with considerable beauty of phrase and of spirit. The author quotes from various books and letters written by soldiers to show the feelings of the young men toward death and what lies after it. The book would be the better for a more definite outline. It has neither the unity of an essay nor the logical divisions of thought that one has a right to expect in a book. A volume of 170 pages with no chapter divisions is rather wearisome.

On Being a Woman.

The Joys of Being a Woman is a merry comradely volume, a book of light and fleeting thoughts, of elusive ideas, of feelings rather than of logic. There is noticed at times a strain after effect, a desire to be entertaining always; but for the most part even the critical reader will surrender himself to the charm of the essays.

This is a quotable book, with many passages that one would like to share

"The Red Heart of Russia"



By DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH.

BESSIE BEATTY, a California newspaper woman, who went to Russia as war correspondent for the *San Francisco Bulletin*, has written a stirring account of her experiences and her impressions in *The Red Heart of Russia*. Miss Beatty arrived in Russia early in June, 1917, and came away on practically the last train that was able to pass through Finland. Thus she witnessed the Bolshevik uprising and was able to study it at first hand. She came to know many of the leaders personally, Lenin, Trotzky and others, and had many interesting conversations through the medium of an interpreter where that was necessary.

Miss Beatty had the courage and the curiosity of a born war correspondent, and she dodged none of the dangers that stood between her and the obtaining of information she sought. She visited the Russian army at the front, passing through trenches that an hour later were blown to pieces by the Germans. She shared the quarters of the Battalion of Death, and knew many of the women sol-

diers as individuals, including Marie Bochkarova, the peasant widow who organized the company.

She knew very well Jacob Peters, the Lettish man who now is wielding such terrible power of life and death, who signs death warrants without even reading the names and who calmly told a woman who asked information concerning her husband, "Shot by mistake." This returned refugee, who had been living in England so long that he speaks Russian with a cockney accent, who married an English "missus," as he calls her, and was lured back to Russia by the news of the revolution, has stepped into far greater power since Miss Beatty knew him. She speaks of going by to give a Christmas present to Jacob Peters.

Miss Beatty went often to see Catherine Breshkovskaya, or Babushka, the "little grandmother of the revolution," who at almost seventy-five years is still taking an active part in Russian affairs. She visited prisons and talked with various ex-Ministers and fallen angels.

Miss Beatty's account of the leaders and forces of the revolutions and counter revolutions in Russia are invariably sympathetic. She seemed to like all the

her journeys, from given fact to deduced truth by packmule, and she by airplane. When he finds her at the destination he is so irritated by the swiftness of her passage that he accuses her of not having followed the right direction and demands as proof that she describe the weeds by the roadside, which he has amply studied—he calls this study his reasoning process. Of course no woman stops to botanize when the object is to get there.

"A house without a man is savored, yet a man in a house is incarnate interruption. To enjoy a home worth having a man should be in it as briefly as possible. The different professions differ in their treatment of a holiday, except that all men at home on a vacation act like fish out of water or cats in water, and expect their womenfolk either to help them pant or help them swim."

"The faces of women who do nothing but keep house are always harassed; the faces of women who do nothing but board are always vacuous. A man who gives his undivided attention to his boarding can fume and fuss and outboarder any woman."

THE NEW DEATH. BY WINIFRED KIRKLAND. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$1.25. THE JOYS OF BEING A WOMAN. BY WINIFRED KIRKLAND. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$1.50.

Russians and find them all sincere. She writes in a clear and forceful style, and no one can read her story without being more interested in Russian problems and more tolerant toward the blundering people.

Two extracts will serve to illustrate Miss Beatty's style and material:

At 10 o'clock Friday night my telephone rang and a weary voice came over the wire. It was my Lettish friend Jacob Peters.

"I am trying to translate something," he said. "It is very important and I do not know enough English. Could you find time to help me?"

"When?" I asked him.

"Now," he said.

"Half an hour later he knocked at my door. His face was gray with fatigue. He had not been in bed for three days, and he looked utterly crushed and discouraged.

"It is the decree of peace to the warring nations of the world," he said. "We are going to send it out on the wireless in every language. They have given me the English translation. We have nobody to help us. It is terrible—there are so few who can do this sort of thing."

"Here was this new government of the People's Commissaries preparing a document that they confidently hoped would revolutionize the status of the struggling world, and there was nobody to translate it but a Lett, who had not been to bed for three days, and an American war correspondent."

She describes the death and the burial of more than 750 persons slain in the Bolshevik revolution in Moscow.

"Close beside the Kremlin wall, in the holiest of holy places, the workmen and soldiers of Moscow dug the great trench that was to receive the bodies of their fallen comrades. All day they dug, and when night came they continued their work by the light of torches. The ghostly lindens trees have stood watch over many strange scenes there on the edge of the Red Square, but none stranger than this crowd of silent men, speechlessly turning the earth through the long, chill, dark hours. By daybreak they had finished.

"It was the day of the proletariat. All others stayed indoors. The streets, but for the mourners of the proletarian dead, were deserted. At 8 o'clock in the morning the procession started, and all day long the people filed past, a vast, endless throng of them, men, women and little children. There were no priests, no prayers. Strong young soldiers in mud-colored coats carried the red coffins on their shoulders, and above the heads of the crowd the crimson banners flowed like a river of blood.

"A sobbing, singing mass of human beings, tragic and triumphant, filled the vast square. Cavalry troops rode by at attention, and girls with platons on their heads carried great oval handboxed wreaths of artificial flowers. Sometimes a military band went by, playing a funeral march, and sometimes the voices of the marchers lifted in the deep, rhythmical strains of the *Hymn of Eternal Memory*. Men and women, old and young, wept as they saw the coffins lowered into that yawning trench."

THE RED HEART OF RUSSIA. By Bessie Beatty. The Century Company. \$2.

Robert F. Putnam, who died last week at the age of 36 of pneumonia following on influenza, was treasurer of G. P. Putnam's Sons and the Knickerbocker Press. He was a graduate of Harvard University and a veteran of the 7th Regiment. He leaves a widow and a son. The house of G. P. Putnam's Sons was closed last Thursday in consequence of his death.

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